

From: [Fort River Watershed Association](#)
To: [Sarah Thoroughgood](#)
Subject: Volunteer Opportunity: Lamprey, lamprey, everywhere!
Date: Thursday, June 9, 2022 6:05:05 PM



News & Updates on the Fort River

JUNE 2022

Want to help survey fish in the Fort River?

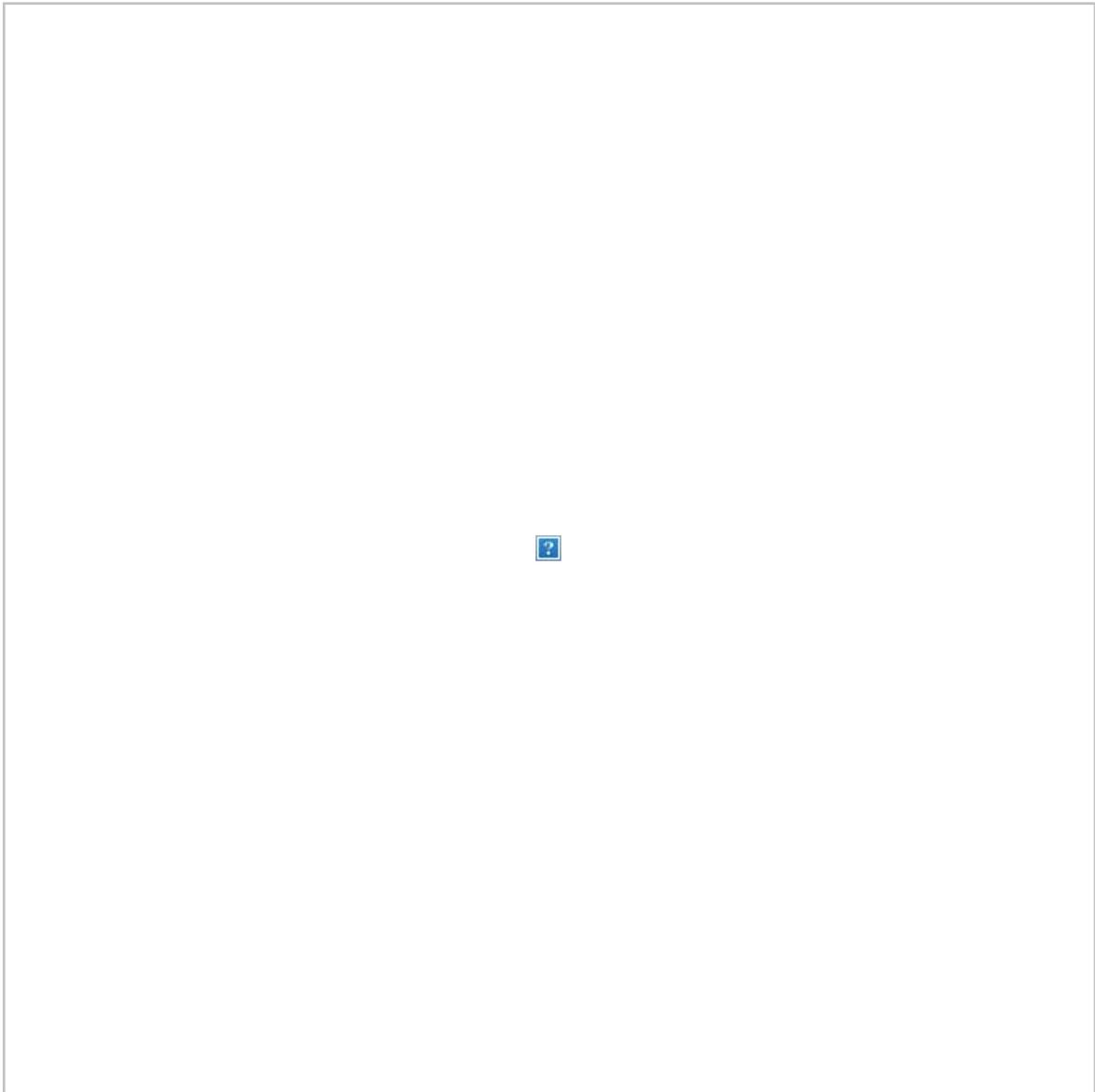
Fort River Watershed Association board member Boyd Kynard needs your help for his annual survey of lamprey spawning in the Fort River. Like salmon, lampreys migrate from the Atlantic Ocean to spawn and then die in the Fort River. Dr. Kynard, emeritus professor of biology at UMass, has been monitoring these amazing migratory fish for 40 years. Help him continue this effort that provides critical information to help conserve lampreys.

Here are the details for this year's sea lamprey volunteer opportunity:

- Training by Dr. Kynard at Groff Park between 6/13 and 6/20/2022
- Walk the Fort River and identify lamprey nests between now and the end of June
- Record the data and pass off to Dr. Kynard
- Play a small role in the conservation of these amazing migratory fish

Please email Dr. Kynard directly no later than Monday 6/13 if you are interested in helping with this year's lamprey survey at:

bkriverfishllc@gmail.com



*Father-son lamprey scientists point out a lamprey nest in the Fort River.
Photo Credit: Will Daniels*

More fun facts about sea lamprey in the Fort River!

Under the direction of local Sea Lamprey researcher, Dr. Boyd Kynard, volunteers from the Fort River Watershed Association helped complete a river-long survey of anadromous sea lamprey nests for the last 2 years! This information contributes to over 30 years of ongoing study of lamprey population size and movement through the Fort River.

These sea lamprey are a type of local migratory fish that spend part of their life in the fresh water rivers of western Massachusetts and Connecticut, and other parts of their life in Atlantic Ocean. These lamprey are called 'anadromous' by scientists to refer to

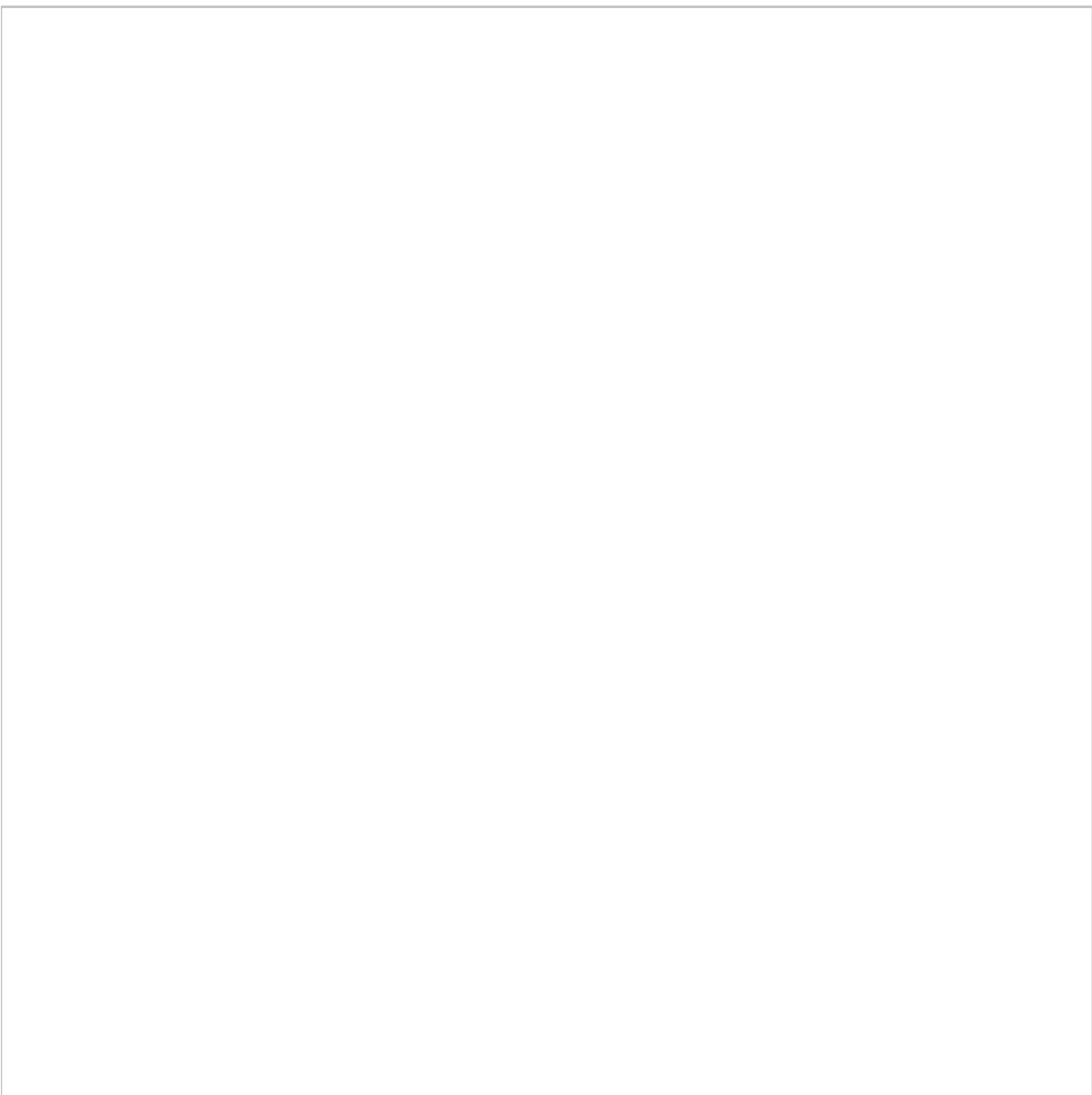
their movement from salt to fresh water to spawn - or, to lay and fertilize eggs that will produce the next generation of lamprey.

Fun facts about anadromous sea lamprey:

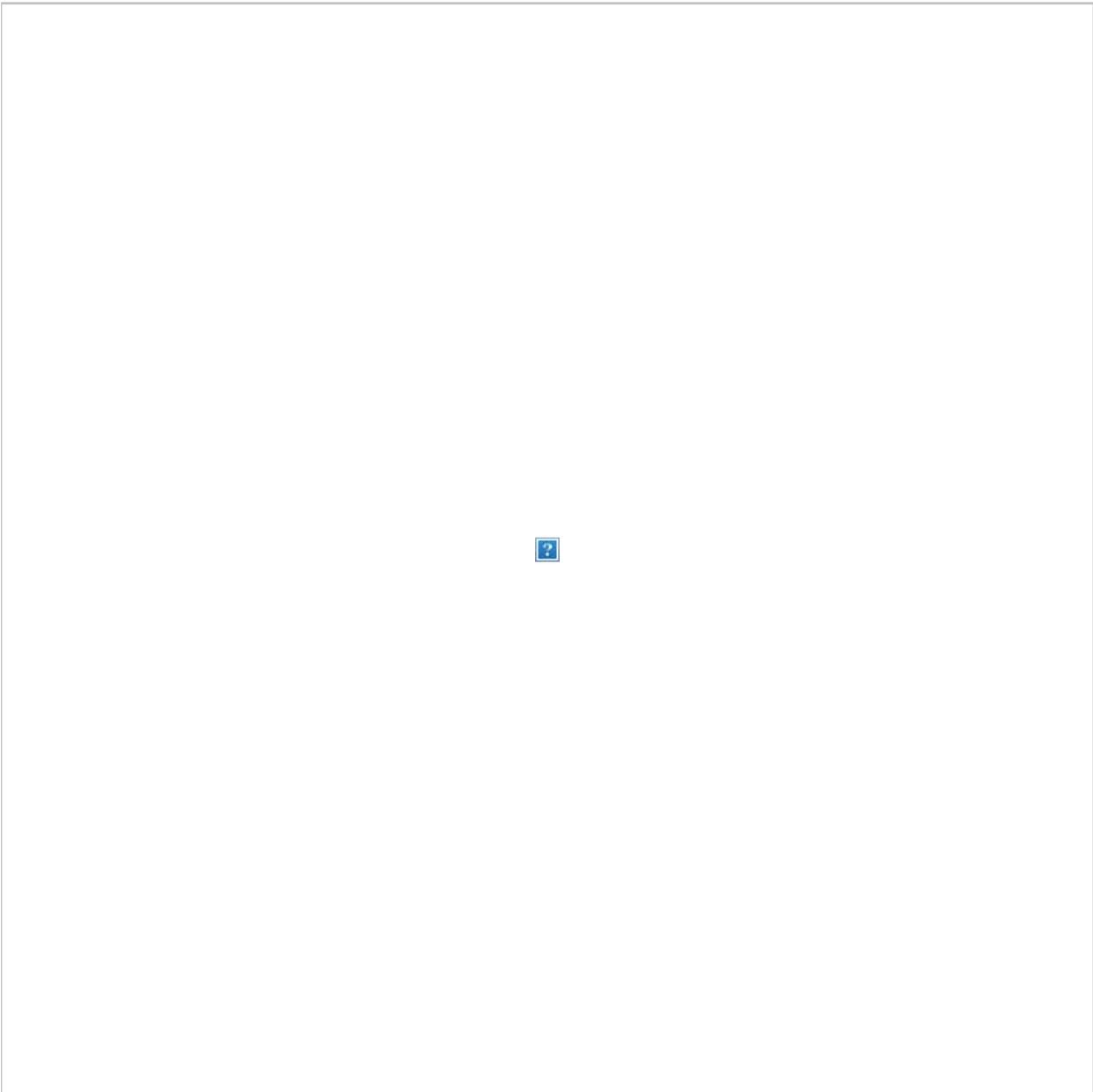
- Lamprey are the most primitive (or, least changed over time) of all living vertebrates (or, critters with a backbone). Fossilized lamprey have been found that date back 360 million years - that's 100 million years before the dinosaurs!
- Sea lamprey have a third eye (called a pineal eye, located on the top of their heads) that helps regulate their natural rhythms for migration and spawning.
- Adult sea lamprey have 10-12 rows of teeth, and use them to feed on other fish during the parts of their life spent in the ocean.
- Lamprey are one of two living kinds of jaw-less fish - making them not really a fish at all. They also have no bones! Their skeleton is made of cartilage, like human noses and ears.

Dr. Kynard's research supports a strong link between the sea lamprey counted at the Holyoke Dam fishway and the number of sea lamprey nests counted in the Fort River. One thing that this tells us is that each year, sea lamprey continue to travel from the Atlantic Ocean up the Connecticut River highway to get to the quiet and rocky-bottom waters of the Fort River to spawn the next generation of sea lamprey. Those lamprey that make it to Holyoke will very likely spend their last days here in the Fort River. The young ones born here will remain in the fresh waters of the Fort for 4-5 years, burrowed in to the river bed and filtering food out of the water that flows past them until they have grown enough to migrate back to the Atlantic Ocean. Like many other migratory fish, free flowing water and clean water are critical to the survival of this species.

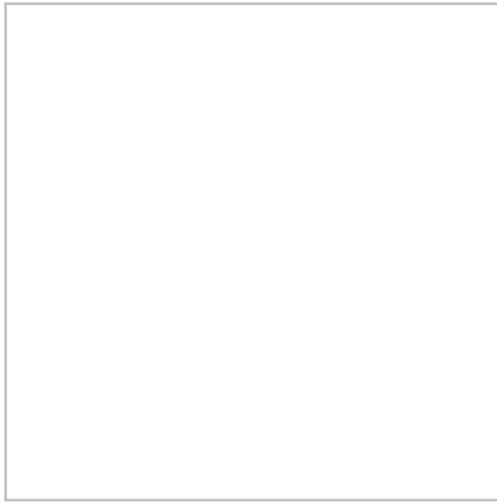
The Fort River is home to many non-human residents and visitors. In addition to the sea lamprey and nests being counted, our volunteers saw crayfish, a Great blue heron and a beaver dam!



Adult lamprey spawning in the Fort River
Photo Credit: Will Daniels



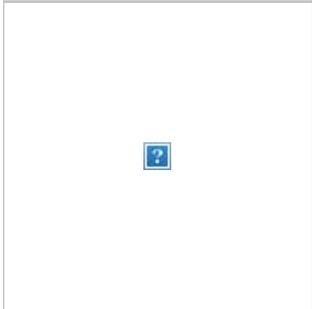
*Can you see the lamprey nest?
Photo Credit: Will Daniels*



*A juvenile sea lamprey rescued during the annual drawdown of the Turner's Falls dam.
Photo Credit: Alike Fornier*



Stay safe,
your neighbors at the
Fort River Watershed Association



The Fort River Watershed Association has partnered with the Connecticut River Conservancy, a local non-profit organization advocating for the Connecticut River watershed since 1952. This working partnership makes us both more effective advocates for our rivers.

For more information on the Connecticut River Conservancy, please visit their website: www.ctriver.org

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